

xenophobic agenda with “few updates.” Hemmer focuses on the evolution of conservative views on key policies from isolationism to trade and on the crucial role of far-right media that sidelined mainstream Republicanism. Two weeks into the Barack Obama administration, the right-wing talk-show host Glenn Beck sensationally denounced the new president as a dictator: “We are really, truly stepping beyond socialism, and we’re starting to look at fascism.” As the narrative nears recent years, Hemmer’s account and Milbank’s converge in a similar retelling of the anger, grievance, nativism, anti-elitism, and conspiracy that Trump recognized and exploited.

## Western Europe

ANDREW MORAVCSIK

*Chums: How a Tiny Caste of Oxford Tories Took Over the UK*

BY SIMON KUPER. Profile Books, 2022, 240 pp.

Most foreigners are perplexed by the flagrant air of diffidence and dilettantism with which former British Prime Minister Boris Johnson and other contemporary Brexiteers have ruled the United Kingdom. According to this engaging and detailed book, their conduct reflects their upbringing. Since 1955, five Conservative prime ministers (and a surprising number of their close associates) have attended Eton College and then Oxford University. At Eton, most of them studied ancient languages, read nostalgic tales of the British Empire,

honed their ability to speak in public, and triumphed over their peers in cutthroat schoolboy politics. Also, whether born to it or not, they learned how to wear white tie, speak with a proper accent, and break rules with a witty insouciance that signaled unquestioned upper-class privilege. Once at Oxford, they eschewed the study of the natural and social sciences in favor of English, constitutional history, and classics—subjects whose obvious lack of practical utility further cemented their social distinction and whose ease allowed them to fake their way through tutorials without sharpening analytical skills or spending hours reading. Instead, they frequented the Oxford Union, a venerable institution of which Johnson was president. At its parliamentary-style debates, they perfected the arts of manipulating arcane procedures, stabbing fellow students in the back, and, above all, making others laugh, which allowed them to triumph over those who came armed with facts, analysis, and a sense of public purpose. Three decades later, the result is an experienced cohort of superficially eccentric yet in fact resolutely reactionary leaders whose ability to appeal to both wealthy interests and popular prejudices has been honed to a fine edge. Theirs may be the last generation of such Oxford Tories, yet their policies may well influence the United Kingdom for generations.

*Salazar: The Dictator Who Refused to Die*

BY TOM GALLAGHER. Hurst, 2020, 360 pp.

In this book, a British academic expert on Portugal seeks to salvage the reputation of António Salazar, the autocrat who

ruled the country from 1932 to 1968. Few would quibble with the first half of the author's argument: rather than being a totalitarian, Salazar was a conservative. His rule was milder than that of contemporaries such as Hitler, Mussolini, Stalin, and Franco. He engaged in only modest domestic repression, sought no territorial expansion, remained neutral in World War II, and took the side of the West in the Cold War. He wore no uniform, proposed no radical ideology, eschewed cults of personality, avoided mobilizing the masses, and lived a restrained and apparently incorrupt personal life. Some may balk, however, at the second half of the argument, namely that Salazar was a "benevolent autocrat," an interpretation that overlooks his suppression of multiparty democracy, his support for the Catholic Church's socially reactionary values, and his disinterest in economic development as long as the government budget remained in balance. The book also dismisses as insignificant Salazar's stubborn (and overtly racist) decision to defend the remains of Portugal's empire. Yet today Portugal is a stable democracy where a recent poll found that its citizens consider Salazar the greatest leader the country has ever had. Gallagher invites readers to wonder whether, in the end, Portugal's slow and cautious road to democracy might have been for the best.

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*Do Elections (Still) Matter?: Mandates, Institutions, and Policy in Western Europe*  
 BY EMILIANO GROSSMAN AND  
 ISABELLE GUINAUDEAU. Oxford  
 University Press, 2022, 224 pp.

Many citizens of European countries, notably those on the far right and left,

believe that elections are meaningless. Politicians make promises, but no matter who wins, shadowy elites and self-serving politicians collude or produce gridlock. This rigorous and data-rich study of five European countries draws a less cynical conclusion. Although the leaders of victorious political parties cannot simply impose their preferred policies, their electoral promises do shape political priorities during their time in government. In multiparty proportional representation systems, such as those in Denmark, France, Germany, and Italy that accord some political representation on the basis of votes cast (and not simply seats won), important issues command focused attention from small groups of voters, who demand action. Ironically, opposition parties often play a critical role in this process of translating election promises into action, because they gain advantage by mobilizing those small groups to punish the government for its failure to deliver on its promises. The United Kingdom, however, emerges as an exception: British parties do not keep their promises. The first-past-the-post electoral system suppresses the distinct ideological identities of the major parties as politicians must try to win a broad electorate; they can afford to ignore the niche inclinations of small groups, whose particular interests have little hope of finding political representation. In such a system, opposition parties cannot score points by appealing to small groups and are therefore less able to hold their rivals to account. This dynamic helps explain not just the widespread perception of some recent British governments as

arbitrary and unpredictable but perhaps also the increasingly disillusioned attitude of voters in the world's other prominent majoritarian political system: the United States.

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*Foreign States in Domestic Markets: Sovereign Wealth Funds and the West*  
BY MARK THATCHER AND TIM VLANDAS. Oxford University Press, 2022, 192 pp.

Rising economic interdependence within a neoliberal global economy is often believed to be undermining the power of sovereign states. These authors respond that, in fact, states are in many respects more active than ever. Over the past 20 years, for example, massive state-run sovereign wealth funds based in Asia and the Middle East have, often acting at the direction of their governments, purchased or invested in many leading financial, retail, sports, media, industry, and technology companies in the United States and Europe. One might have expected a hostile reaction to efforts by figures from nondemocratic countries such as China, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, and the United Arab Emirates to buy into Western economies. Yet most in the West have welcomed such state investment. The only major country to enact laws discriminating against these foreign entities, thereby limiting their presence, is the United States. Despite their patina of political science jargon, the four case studies in this book offer basic data and succinct analysis of recent policies on this issue—which is sure to loom large as Western democracies ponder how to respond to the rising geoeconomic power of their global competitors.

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*The New Atlantic Order: The Transformation of International Politics, 1860–1933*

BY PATRICK O. COHRS. Cambridge University Press, 2022, 1,112 pp.

This magisterial work focuses on the failure to prevent World War II. Realists and liberal defenders of the League of Nations have long contended that after World War I, France, the United Kingdom, and, above all, the United States should have formed a military alliance to contain Germany. Cohrs advances a less well-known argument. In his view, any European order based solely on military containment was doomed unless it addressed the deeper sources of all European conflicts from 1850 to the present: diverging claims of national self-determination, opposing economic and financial interests, and intense ideological strife between the political right, left, and center. Not enough was done at Versailles—and, the author sometimes seems to suggest, not enough could possibly have been done—to resolve these matters in ways that would have lent the settlement a critical measure of domestic and international legitimacy. This failure encouraged nondemocratic revisionist powers (notably, but not only, Hitler's Germany) to make intractable demands, such as to revise the Treaty of Versailles and to restore lost territory, with fatal consequences for the post-war peace. Although this account owes much to classic works by the economist John Maynard Keynes and the sociologist Max Weber, among others, its sweeping synthesis and grounding in primary sources makes an impressive thousand-page read.